



NATION | PAGE 07
Language row: Clashes at K'taka-Maha border



WORLD | PAGE 09
Hamas frees last six Israeli hostages
 Captives include three abducted from Nova music festival



SPORT | PAGE 10
Inglis' record ton helps Aus beat Eng in thriller

In a nutshell

Das Principal Secretary to Modi

NEW DELHI: Former Governor of Reserve Bank of India Shaktikanta Das was on Saturday appointed the second Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. According to an official order, the tenure of Das, a retired IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, will be "co-terminus" with the term of the PM or until further orders, whichever is earlier. PTI

MLC polls: Liquor shops to be closed

HYDERABAD: Wine, toddy shops and bars attached to restaurants, including the bars in star hotels and registered clubs, in the limits of Kollur and RC Puram police stations in Cyberabad Police Commissionerate will remain closed in view of biennial elections to the Telangana State Legislative Council from Graduates and Teachers Constituencies from 4 pm on February 25 to 4 pm on February 27.

Class VIII student jumps to death

HYDERABAD: Upset over a teacher scolding him, a Class VIII student died by suicide by jumping from the school building in Uppal on Saturday. The boy, Sangareddy (14), the second son of Dharma Reddy and Sangeetha from Dwaraka Nagar in Boduppal, was studying at Sagar Grammar School at New Bharat Nagar in Uppal. The body was shifted to Gandhi Hospital for a post-mortem. HYDERABAD PAGE 3

APPSC Group-II as per schedule

VIJAYAWADA: The Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) Group-II Mains exam will be conducted as usual on Sunday. The exam is being conducted as per earlier schedule, as it was not possible to reschedule it in the last moment, the APPSC is learnt to have written to the government. Earlier, the government wrote to APPSC asking it to reschedule the examination in view of the court case on roster system.

Two nabbed for selling cigarettes to minors

HYDERABAD: The Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau, along with Jubilee Hills police, conducted a sting operation and caught two persons who were found selling cigarettes to minor boys. The minors, who were buying the cigarettes, were also detained. Based on a tip-off, the TSANB kept surveillance on two kirana shops located at Jubilee Hills and noticed that the shop owners were selling cigarettes to minor boys. The team recorded the activity using hidden cameras and took into custody the shop owners, Gandham Pramila (48) and K Venkateshwara Rao (55). The minor boys were counselled in the presence of their parents and let off.

60 cr took dip at Maha Kumbh so far



A devotee takes a holy dip during the Maha Kumbh Mela, at Sangam in Prayagraj on Saturday. — Photo:PTI

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday said an unprecedented 60 crore devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam. The Kumbh Mela which started on January 13 will continue till February 26 on the occasion of Maha Shivratri. Over half of India's 110 crore Sanatan followers have bathed in the

holy confluence, and this number is expected to surpass 65 crore by the final 'amrit snan' on February 26, an official statement said. This Maha Kumbh has seen the largest participation in any religious, cultural, or social event, it said. According to the World Population Review, India's population is approximately 143 crore, with 110 crore followers of Sanatan Dharma, it said. PTI

Eight trapped in SLBC tunnel, rescue ops under way

State seeks help of experts; Modi dials Revanth, assures CM of all support

STATE BUREAU
 HYDERABAD

Eight persons were trapped inside after a section of the roof collapsed in an under-construction stretch in the tunnel of the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project. According to Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy, the State government is taking the help of experts, including those who rescued the trapped workers in an incident in Uttarakhnad last year, apart from seeking the help of the Indian Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

Those trapped, about 14 km into the tunnel, include two engineers, two machine operators and four workers – all working for Robbins Tunnel Boring Machines Manufacturing Company and Jaiprakash Associates LTS. They were identified as Sunny Singh and Gurpreet Singh of Robbins, apart from Manoj Kumar, Srinivas, Sandeep Sahu, Jagath, Santosh Sahu and Anuj Sahu, all with Jaiprakash Associates. According to the



The under construction stretch in the tunnel of Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project where a section of roof collapsed, in Nagarkurnool district on Saturday.

Minister, who reached the spot along with Minister Jupally Krishna Rao and other senior irrigation officials, about 50 workers had gone into the worksite around 8 am, and the tunnel boring machine was being operated from 8.30 am. (SEE PAGES 2, 5)

KTR BLAMES REVANTH FOR INCIDENT, DEMANDS PROBE

HYDERABAD: Holding Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy squarely responsible for the SLBC tunnel roof collapse, BRS working president and MLA K T Rama Rao pointed out that the incident that occurred close on the heels of

the retaining wall collapse in the under-construction intake well at Sunkishala near the Nagarjuna Sagar dam. Highlighting the failures of the Congress-led State government, the former Minister accused the gov-

ernment of compromising on quality standards and supervision due to collusion with contractors and the pursuit of commissions. He demanded an inquiry into the tunnel roof collapse. (REPORT PAGE 5)

KTR dares CM for debate on BRS rule

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Coming down heavily on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for his outrageous claims about Telangana's economic status during the 10-year rule of the State's first Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, BRS working president KT Rama Rao asserted that neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts nor Rahul Gandhi's numerous Jodo Yatras could bring about the kind of development Telangana had witnessed during the BRS regime. Addressing a news conference at Telangana Bhavan, Rama Rao took strong exception to Congress claims of an economic downturn in State during the BRS rule. Expressing his readiness for a discussion in the As-

sembly on Telangana's economic progress, he highlighted that Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka had already presented factual reports refuting Revanth Reddy's allegations.

False propaganda Citing the State Statistical Abstract report released by the government, which contradicted Revanth Reddy's claims, Rama Rao remarked that for the last 15 months, every Congress leader, including Revanth Reddy, was relentlessly spreading false propaganda about Telangana's economic progress, likening them to the heirs of German propagandist Joseph Goebbels. He thanked Bhatti Vikramarka for his comprehensive report that helped in refuting Revanth Reddy's lies. (SEE PAGE 2)

6-yr-old stuck in elevator shaft dies

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

A six-year-old boy who spent harrowing hours trapped in a lift before being rescued at Shantinagar in Masab Tank, passed away at a city hospital here on Saturday. The boy, Arnav, slipped through the gap between the lift door and the wall while stepping out of the lift in his residential apartment complex in Shantinagar of Masab Tank on Friday evening. Panicked at this, he kept screaming, which attracted the attention of other residents who rushed to his aid but couldn't pull him out. Alerted by the residents, the police teams, along with personnel from the Fire Department and the disaster response teams of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, rushed to the spot. (SEE PAGE 2)

Centre for new laws to regulate digital platforms

NEW DELHI

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry is examining the existing statutory provisions and the need for a new legal framework to regulate "harmful" content amid complaints of "obscenity and violence" being shown on digital platforms. In its reply to a parliamentary panel, the Ministry said there is a growing concern in society that the Constitutional right of "freedom of expression is being misused to showcase obscene and violent content on digital platforms".

'Harmful content'

It said that the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology headed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, stated that while certain provisions exist under the current laws, there is a growing demand for a stricter and more effective legal framework to regulate such harmful content. It said, "This Ministry has taken note of these developments and is in the process of examining current statutory provisions and the need for a new

I&B MINISTRY SAYS THERE IS GROWING CONCERN IN SOCIETY THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS BEING MISUSED TO AIR OBSCENE CONTENT ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

legal framework." The Ministry said that many High Courts and the Supreme Court, MPs and statutory bodies like the National Commission of Women have spoken on the issue, which has made headlines after the crass comments of social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia drew wide condemnation. Criminal cases have been registered against him, and his apology has done little to damp down the controversy. While the Supreme Court granted him protection from arrest, it also made very critical observations about his vulgar comments. The Ministry said that the committee would submit a detailed note after due deliberations. (SEE PAGE 2)

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